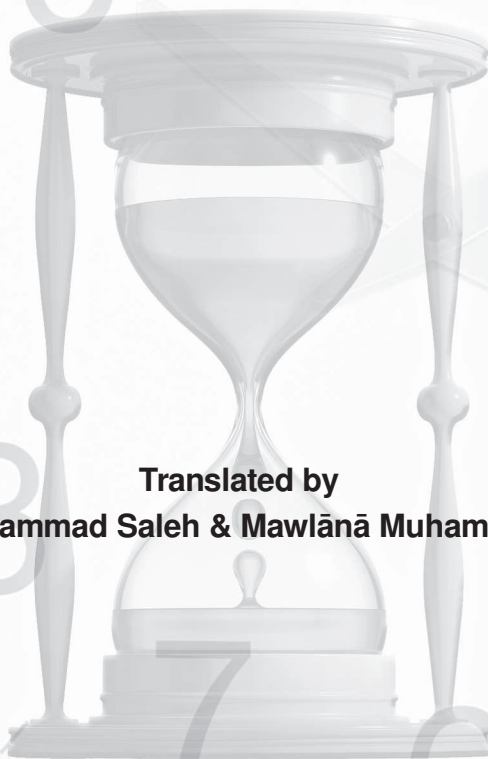
Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat
ḥafiẓahullāh

VALUING the Asset of TIME

Translated by
Ḥāfiẓ Dr. Muhammad Saleh & Mawlānā Muhammad Chothia

at-tazkiyah

Contents

Foreword

Time is from amongst the greatest gifts bestowed upon mankind, for their very existence and everything that revolves around it is dependent on time. It is said, 'Time is life and life is time.' Despite its invaluable and precious nature, it is probably the most neglected of gifts. Many common pastime endeavours and entertainment activities are robbers of time and inadvertently, life.

Success in all spheres of a human's life, whether religious or worldly, spiritual or physical, monetary or otherwise revolves around valuing time and utilising it most efficiently. All those who have made a name in history, have done so through valuing time. With ultimate and eternal success being dependent on the outcome of the Hereafter, our pious predecessors have all laid much emphasis on this reality, encouraging their students and associates to make most of their precious life and time and not let a single second go to waste.

My most beloved and honourable Shaykh, Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth, Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafiẓahullāh*, continually encourages all his associates to value time, and has touched on this very important topic on numerous occasions, both in the Urdu and English languages, guiding many to realise its importance.

This booklet is a translation of the respected Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh*'s book in Urdu titled, 'Matā'-e-waqt kī qadar',

which is a transcription of a speech originally delivered by the respected Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh*. Being the first work of the respected Shaykh published in Urdu, it achieved much acclaim and recognition from Urdu-speaking 'Ulamā, and also the general masses from all sectors. The Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh* in this booklet, through his simple, appealing, and most logical manner, elaborates on this topic by citing examples from the lives of our pious predecessors and giving practical solutions to overcome this problem.

I end conceding that it is not befitting someone like me who is unmindful of the very contents of this booklet to be writing a foreword on it. However, with hope in Allāh ﷻ that these few words bring about a positive change, I have put pen to paper. May Allāh ﷻ guide all those who read this booklet to value the asset of time and accept all the efforts of the respected Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh*, lengthening his shadow over us so that we may benefit from him for many more years. Āmīn

(Shaykh Mawlānā) Ayadh Sidat *ḥafiẓahullāh*
24th Ṣafar 1433 / 17th January 2012

Foreword

(Translation of the Urdu foreword
from the original Urdu book)

From the blessed souls that have been chosen by Allāh ﷻ for the propagation and dissemination of Islām, in Europe, a leading personality is Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat (May Allāh ﷻ benefit the Muslims by granting him a long life full of goodness), who is blessed with the attention of our pious mashāyikh, towards whom flock both the learned and the layman, and whose being is an illuminating light for all across Europe.

The respected Shaykh is the founder and director of the Islamic Da'wah Academy in Leicester, UK. He is the chief editor of the monthly Islamic journal 'Riyāḍul Jannah' and the founder, principal and Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth of Jāme'ah Riyāḍul 'Uloom, an Islamic higher education establishment also based in Leicester, UK. The Shaykh is a personality of pious disposition. He has great love and fervour for knowledge and its propagation, and is the possessor of an array of unique abilities and skills in the various spheres of lecturing, writing, teaching and spiritual reformation; his illustrious accomplishments are many in all these fields and, inshā'allāh, lasting. In addition, he is a true standard-bearer in the fields of teaching and tarbiyah (Islamic moral reformation) and capabilities of organisation and administration, leading to his institute achieving distinction in this regard.

He is a personality of great foresight who enlightens and nurtures, rather, creates talents in others. He is a manifestation of continuous striving and enthusiasm. Upon initially encountering him, his intelligence, forethought, magnanimity, ambition, and his nurturing, promoting and encouraging of the youth leaves a lasting impression on the heart and mind.

In this age, which can only be described as the autumn of humanity due to moral decay, he rules over the hearts of the people, especially the youth, who generally have apathy towards the concept of respect and honour for such venerable personalities. It is due to his sincerity, strong conviction, soft heartedness and cheerful disposition that he has captured the hearts and minds of the youth.

His kindness and its positive effects, his efforts day and night to bring about a moral revolution in the thinking and ideologies of the Muslim Ummah, especially the youth, are worthy of envy. His lectures and discourses instil a love for the Qur'ān and Sunnah in the heart. They also create a broadness in one's thoughts, strengthen one's 'aqīdah and gain control over the listener's realm of thought and streams of zeal. His words leave a lasting effect in nurturing and disciplining the intellect and thinking of the youth.

His outpouring and effluence of Divine Love, together with teaching the etiquettes of this path, makes a person recognise the ecstasy and the pleasure of feeling the closeness of Allāh ﷻ. His lectures comprise of delightful speech and eloquence, which are delivered spontaneously, and are a reflection of true passion and emotion. Due to every word being from the depth of the heart, they leave a significant effect. Along with the

delightful speech, his every word is full of sincerity and Divine Love, the blessings of which are clearly visible just as the early morning dew on the petals of a flower. One feels the genuine concern of the heart shining through the beautiful garment of his words.

His audio lectures are in hundreds, from which is a lecture entitled 'Valuing the Asset of Time', which is in your hands in book format. The task of bringing the discourse into written form from audio was carried out by my respected Muftī Ibrahim Itālwī *ḥafiẓahullāh*, who is a lecturer of ḥadīth at Jāme'ah Riyāḍul 'Uloom, Leicester. The respected Muftī is worthy of much commendation and accolade that he, together with his teaching commitments, gave attention to this important work and exerted much effort in accomplishing the task of bringing the Shaykh's academic and reformative speech into book form.

What is this lecture? It is a lecture which is a cure for those who suffer from the malady of neglect towards time. It is an alchemy that makes the use of time, which could become a means of punishment in the hereafter due to its misuse, into a means of blessings. It is a lifeline for the many who are preoccupied in futile endeavours. It is a trustworthy means for safeguarding the asset of time. It is a heavy down pouring cloud for cleansing those immersed in the dust of negligence and laxity. It is a parasite in the shell of the mollusc of life. It is an illuminating moon in the dark night of futility. It is an antidote for the venomous poison of wasting time.

I have penned these few words with this hope that I gain a connection to the Respected Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh*'s valuable

discourse; and that it will inshā'allāh serve as an encouragement for the transcriber to transcribe the remaining discourses and lectures of the Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh* into book form. The reality is that my words have not done justice in highlighting the features of this discourse, and this foreword is akin to a patch of sack cloth on a velvet sheet.

Finally, I pray that Allāh ﷻ grant this book acceptance in His Court and make it beneficial in the Hereafter for the Shaykh *ḥafiẓahullāh*, Muftī Ibrahim, and all those who assisted in any way. Amīn.

(Shaykh Muftī) Umar Farooq *ḥafiẓahullāh*
9th Rabī'-al-Awwal 1427 / 7th April 2006

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اَلحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَكَفى وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَعَلَى اٰلِهِ الأَصْفِيَاءِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الأَتْقِيَاءِ، اَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَال النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لا يَعْنِيْهِ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِيْ صَدْرِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ أَمْرِيْ وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِسَانِيْ يَفْقَهُوْا قَوْلِيْ. سُبْحَانَكَ لا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْم. اللّٰهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا. إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا، اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَاتِهِ.

Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ

Abū Dāwūd ﷺ is the appellation of the great muḥaddith, Imām Sulaymān ibn Ash'ath As-Sijistānī ﷺ. The Imām's famous book, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, is classified amongst the most authentic compilations of aḥādīth. Regarding Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ, the muḥaddith, Mūsā ibn Hārūn ﷺ commented:

خُلِقَ أَبُوْ دَاوُدَ فِي الدُّنْيَا لِلْحَدِيْثِ وَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لِلْجَنَّةِ

> "Imām Abū Dāwūd was created for the service of aḥādīth in this world and to enter Jannah in the Hereafter."

After reviewing a copy of the Sunan of Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ, Muḥaddith Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq Aṣ-Ṣāghānī ﷺ and Muḥaddith Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥarbī ﷺ stated:

أُلِيْنَ لِأَبِيْ دَاوُدَ الْحَدِيْثُ كَمَا أُلِيْنَ لِدَاوُدَ الْحَدِيْدُ

> "The science of ḥadīth has been made easy for Imām Abū Dāwūd, just as iron was made soft for Prophet Dāwūd ﷺ."

Such was the status and acceptance of Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ that once Shaykh Sahl ibn 'Abdullāh At-Tusturī ﷺ – a leading

pious predecessor who had the good fortune of benefiting from the company of the acclaimed Shaykh Dhū-an-Nūn Al-Miṣrī - visited Imām Abū Dāwūd. He said to Imām Abū Dāwūd that he had a need which he would only mention if the Imām promised to fulfil it. Imām Abū Dāwūd promised that he would fulfil Shaykh Sahl's need if it was within his capacity. Upon this Shaykh Sahl said:

اَخْرِجْ إِلَيَّ لِسَانَكَ الَّذِيْ تُحَدِّثُ بِهِ أَحَادِيْثَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَتّٰى أُقَبِّلَهُ

> "Please take out your blessed tongue with which you narrate the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ so that I may kiss it (as a token of respect and honour)."

The Chosen Aḥādīth of Imām Abū Dāwūd

Imām Abū Dāwūd was blessed by Allāh in the field of ḥadīth to work vigorously in memorising and compiling the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He said:

> I have collected five hundred thousand aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, from which I have chosen four thousand eight hundred for inclusion in my Sunan. And from amongst this entire collection there are four such aḥādīth, which if practised upon, are sufficient for a person to attain piety. They are:

1. إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

   "Actions are dependent upon intentions."

2. مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَايَعْنِيْهِ

   "It is from the excellence of an individual's Islām that he leaves Lā ya'nī (those things which do not benefit him)."

3. لَا يَكُوْنُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مُؤْمِنًا حَتّٰى يَرْضىٰ لِأَخِيْهِ مَا يَرْضىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ

   "A person cannot be a complete believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself."

4. اَلْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ وَ بَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ

   "Ḥalāl is evident and ḥarām is evident. And between these two are vague and unclear things."

If we ponder upon these aḥādīth, we will come to appreciate that they are in reality a summary of the whole Dīn. The renowned scholar, Shāh 'Abd-al-'Azīz Al-Muḥaddith Ad-Dihlawī ﷺ commenting upon this quartet states:

> "The first ḥadīth is sufficient to rectify one's worship. The second ḥadīth is enough for preserving the valuable seconds of one's life. The third ḥadīth is the fundamental principle when it comes to fulfilling the rights of the servants of Allāh ﷻ. And the fourth ḥadīth, by virtue of exhorting abstinence from vague and unclear matters, is the underlying principle of taqwā and piety."

The Chosen Aḥādīth of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ

The acclaim and status of the great Imām of Fiqh, Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ, is such that the Imām needs no introduction. On one occasion Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ said to his son, Ḥammād ﷺ,

> "From five hundred thousand aḥādīth I have selected five; these encompass the whole of what is required for a person's Dīn."

The great Imām selected the same quartet as Imām Abū Dāwūd, with the fifth ḥadīth being:

اَلْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُوْنَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَ يَدِهِ

"A true Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe."

This ḥadīth also contains a comprehensive message. If the underlying concept of this ḥadīth was followed in the correct manner then we would see peace and harmony prevailing in our world.

When we compare the two aforementioned selections, it seems probable that Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ based his quartet of comprehensive aḥādīth upon the quintet selected by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ. This is possible as Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ was born fifty two years after the demise of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ. Also, Imām Abū Dāwūd's ﷺ admiration of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ and his lofty status can be easily gauged as he said:

رَحِمَ اللّٰهُ أَبَا حَنِيْفَةَ أَنْ كَانَ إِمَاماً

"May Allāh have mercy on Imām Abū Ḥanīfah; for indeed he was a great Imām."

From this introduction it is hoped that we can appreciate the significance and importance of the aḥādīth which have been mentioned. The ḥadīth which I wish to make the basis of my discussion is from among these aḥādīth.

Sign of a Good Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ said:

مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَعْنِيْهِ

"It is from amongst the excellence of an individual's Islām that he leaves lā ya'nī (those things which do not

benefit him).” (At-Tirmidhī)

This ḥadīth teaches that the sign of a good Muslim is that he does not become involved in lā ya‘nī. Thus, it is important to understand what constitutes lā ya‘nī.

Any act which is futile is lā ya‘nī; and futile acts are those that do not bring any benefit in this world nor the Hereafter. Consequently - keeping in mind the chosen aḥādīth of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah ﷺ and Imām Abū Dāwūd ﷺ - in order for a person to be classed as a pious Muslim, it is necessary that he refrains from saying such things and from doing such actions which bring no benefit in this world or the Hereafter.

Upon further contemplation, we can appreciate that the individual who involves himself in acts of lā ya‘nī is in reality wasting the precious moments of his life. We also need to realise that wasting time is indeed a great loss, for time is such a commodity that once it has been wasted it can never be reacquired.

Achieving an Objective

In this world, every person has objectives which he wishes to achieve. For example, the objective of a businessman is to see his business prosper. Likewise, the objective of those who are infatuated with this world is to attain and hoard as much of this world as they can, whereas the prime objective and purpose of a Muslim’s life is to attain success and prosper in the Hereafter.

If we were to assess the lives of those who have set themselves an objective, then we will notice a number of things: such

people never let other things distract them from fulfilling those tasks which will help them achieve their desired objective; they never allow even a single opportunity which will help them progress slip away; their resolve is such that they seldom become neglectful of their objective for even a single moment. These are things which intelligence dictates for those who have set objectives in life.

This is why a businessman will not be ready to meet or even speak to anyone without necessity during business hours. This is what intelligence demands, for it is only through such dedication that the businessman can achieve what he wants. Such people, as far as achieving their selected objective is concerned, are very intelligent. This is because, after setting a target, they value their time, spending it wisely with great care. As a result they reach the peak of success in their selected field.

Our Condition

When we consider the condition of the Muslim of today, it is indeed amazing. Despite being blessed with Faith, unfortunately, a Muslim does not even know what the objective of life is or even what it should be; he does not even realise that the precious seconds that he wastes are taking him ever so quickly towards the Hereafter and his final reckoning. He continues to remain in the slumber of negligence squandering his life in useless pursuits.

Thus, he becomes an example of the verse of the Qur'ān which states:

﴿اقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ ۝١﴾

"The reckoning of the people has drawn near to them, while they are in negligence, turning away." (21:1)

It is very sad to see that we have drifted so far away from the beautiful teachings of our beloved Prophet ﷺ. We are either totally unaware of these teachings or we have limited knowledge; even the knowledge we have is fruitless for it is not translated into practice.

We have reduced Islām to a few rituals and customs, which results in us wasting hours upon hours in storytelling, political discussions, reading newspapers, talking about others, etc. These actions bring us no benefit whatsoever in this world or the Hereafter.

رہ گئی رسمِ اذاں روحِ بلالی نہ رہی　　فلسفہ رہ گیا تلقینِ غزالی نہ رہی

"Left behind is the practice of adhān, but the spirit of Bilāl ؓ has disappeared.

The philosophy remains, but the direction of Al-Ghazālī is no more."

تکبیر تو اب بھی ہوتی ہے مسجد کی فضا میں اے انور

جس ضرب سے دل ہل جاتے تھے وہ ضرب لگانا بھول گئے

"Even today, the takbīr is called in the Masjid's vicinity, O Anwar!

But the strength with which it used to stir the hearts has long been forgotten."

It is because of this very carelessness that we as an Ummah are in a great loss, and because our priorities have changed we are living a life of disgrace!

A Sporting Interest

Interest in sports such as football and cricket is a common phenomenon of our time, and the obsession shown by its followers leaves one speechless. We should be shedding tears of blood, that we Muslims, who have been sent into this world as means of guidance, are ourselves wasting our precious lives in futile sporting interests.

We spend countless hours watching sport on the television and the internet or listening to sporting commentary on the radio. Do we ever remember Allāh ﷻ whilst involved in these past times? Are these useless past times anything but a means of distracting us from the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ?

Such is the negligence shown that not only is ṣalāh with congregation missed, but ṣalāh is not read at all. If we do somehow manage to come to the masjid to perform ṣalāh, then both within the masjid and throughout the ṣalāh the only thoughts that run through our minds are of the game that we are missing. If a match is being played at the time of Jumu'ah ṣalāh, then coming for Jumu'ah becomes difficult and burdensome. Neither do we arrive in time to listen to the khuṭbah, nor do we pray the sunnah ṣalāh. Do we think that our religion permits us to be involved in such activities which make us this neglectful of remembering Allāh ﷻ, and of reading ṣalāh and fulfilling our duties?

The gravity of the situation is further aggravated by the fact that not only are we devoted to sports, but we become devotees of sport stars and sporting professionals. We take these individuals as our role models. We copy the way they walk, the

way they talk and the way they dress. We try to copy every aspect of our sporting idol's life. Do we think it is permissible for a Muslim to hold such great adoration and affection for a person whose life totally contradicts Islamic values?

We need to realise that we are wasting our time in such a pursuit which brings no tangible benefit in this world or the Hereafter. Remember, to waste one's time is to waste one's life. And to utilise one's time is to utilise one's life.

Investing Time

Through remembering Allāh ﷻ for just a few moments we can attain limitless goodness. Think that just by reciting the Qur'ān for a few minutes we can attain a mountain of reward. By saying Alḥamdulillāh once we receive enough good deeds to fill the scales on the Day of Qiyāmah. By saying Subḥānallāh and Alḥamdulillāh we receive enough reward to fill the emptiness that exists between the heavens and the earth. Whosoever values time will tread the path to success both in this world and the Hereafter.

Our Pious Predecessors and their Valuing Time

The value of time in the eyes of our pious predecessors can be understood from the following few incidents:

Shaykh Dāwūd Aṭ-Ṭā'ī ﵀ was a great saint. It was his habit that whenever it was time to eat, he would break the bread into small pieces and soak them in water. Then, he would once again engage in his work until the bread had soaked up the water (and become like porridge), after which he would consume it.

When asked as to why he did this and not eat the bread with curry like others do, he said that he had calculated the time it took to eat the way he did and the time it took to eat bread and curry like others do. He noticed that as a result he gained the time to recite fifty verses of the Glorious Qur'ān. Once he realised this worth, this became his practice so as to gain the extra benefit that little time offered.

Shaykh Sirrī ﵀ mentions regarding Shaykh Al-Jurjānī ﵀ that I saw him swallowing dried barley parchment. When I asked him regarding this habit of his, he said, "I calculated the time it took to eat curry with bread as compared to swallowing dried barley parchment, and found that I could recite Subḥānallāh seventy times! For this reason, for forty years I have not eaten bread and curry, sufficing on dried barley parchments."

It is mentioned regarding Shaykh Salīm Ar-Rāzī ﵀, a pious saint from the 5th century, and also regarding Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar Al-'Asqalānī ﵀, the famous commentator on the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imām Al-Bukhārī ﵀, that when their writing instruments would become blunt and needed sharpening, then together with sharpening the instrument they would busy themselves in the dhikr of Allāh ﷾. This was so that their time would be utilised in two profitable activities: dhikr and making preparations for writing, as that is also a virtuous act. Such was the value they had attached to time.

This realisation and understanding is also a blessing from Allāh ﷾, for every individual does not possess it. It is a blessing which is gifted to those individuals who have tasted the sweetness of the love of Allāh ﷾ and are concerned with developing their Hereafter. Their state then becomes such that

they are unwilling to give up their time for anything which will deviate them from their objective.

A Priceless Asset

Shaykh Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī At-Thānwī has narrated an amazing incident from the life of the renowned Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Adham. Once, Khaḍir came to visit Shaykh Ibrāhīm whilst he was busy in the dhikr of Allāh. Following a brief greeting and exchange of pleasantries, Shaykh Ibrāhīm resumed his dhikr. Khaḍir was astonished by Shaykh Ibrāhīm's dedication. So he said to Shaykh Ibrāhīm, "People wait many years hoping to get a chance to meet me, but they are unable to. I myself have come to meet you, yet you do not seem concerned in the least!" Upon this, Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Adham replied, "Only that person desires to meet you who has time in which he is free from desiring to meet Allāh."

We, on the other hand, are always free because we place no value on time. It is an obvious truth that from amongst all the blessings we have been granted, Īmān is the greatest. However, in one aspect, time is an even greater blessing than Īmān. This is because if we did not have time we would not exist, for life consists of nothing but time. If we were not alive and if we had not been created, then we would not have been able to benefit from the great gift of Īmān. Without the blessing of life we are unable to attain the wealth of Īmān, ṣalāh, fast, or communicate with Allāh through supplication. Without life we are unable to attain the friendship of Allāh, enter into Jannah or be blessed by seeing Allāh in the Hereafter.

It is through the medium of time that we have the opportunity to benefit from all the blessings of this world and the Hereafter. If the moments of time which constitute our life were absent, then how would we have benefited from all these great blessings?

From this we can appreciate what a great asset time is. Consequently, the one who wastes this valuable asset in lā ya‘nī is practically announcing that this priceless asset holds no value in his eyes.

Value of Time in Light of the Aḥādīth

There are numerous aḥādīth of the Prophet ﷺ which turn one's attention towards making the most of time and not wasting it. Amongst these sayings are:

خِيَارُكُمْ أَطْوَلُكُمْ أَعْمَارًا وَأَحْسَنُكُمْ أَعْمَالاً

"The best amongst you is the one with the longest life and the best actions." (Aḥmad)

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ وَحَسُنَ عَمَلُهُ

"The best person is he whose life is long and actions are good." (At-Tirmidhī)

اغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ: شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ

"Value five things before (they are overtaken) by another five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you become occupied and your life before your death." (Al-Ḥākim)

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيْهِمَا كَثِيْرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

> "Two favours (of Allāh) are such that many people are in loss regarding them: (they are) health and free time." (Al-Bukhārī)[i]

From these aḥādīth it is not difficult to appreciate the great emphasis that the Prophet ﷺ placed on valuing time. We can thus conclude that it is the desire of the Prophet ﷺ that we do not waste a single second of our lives in fruitless acts.

The Prophet ﷺ was more merciful than a mother and more kind than a father when it came to matters concerning his Ummah. He ﷺ has shown us all those deeds which will take us closer to Jannah so that we can adopt them, and also all those deeds which will take us towards Jahannam so that we can avoid them.

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لَيْسَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُقَرِّبُكُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَيُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ إِلَّا قَدْ أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ يُقَرِّبُكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَيُبَاعِدُكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا قَدْ نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ

> "O people! There is nothing that will take you close to Jannah and away from Jahannam but that I have instructed you regarding it; and there is nothing that will take you close to Jahannam and away from Jannah but that I have prohibited you from it." (Al-Bayhaqī)

[i] The ḥadīth means that many people incur great loss with regards free time and good health, by not utilising them in acquiring the best of this world and the hereafter, especially the hereafter. The realisation of this loss only dawns on them when they become deprived of these two blessings.

A Worthless Purchase

What a great favour it is of our beloved Prophet ﷺ that he clearly showed us the path through which we can acquire the everlasting bliss of Jannah, and save ourselves from the punishment of Jahannam. This is why, prior to undertaking any action, we should always ponder upon whether the action we are about to undertake is according to the teachings of our beloved ﷺ or not. We should also think as to whether the action is going to bring us benefit in the Hereafter as well as this world.

Remember, if any action is of no benefit in either of the two worlds, then it is classed as lā ya‘nī, and it is something which does not befit a Muslim. A Muslim knows and appreciates the value of time, so to engage in such an action will be a means of incurring great loss.

Imagine if an individual were to buy a worthless stone for a hundred thousand pounds, then, even though the stone is not something which will inherently cause him harm, every intelligent person will say that this individual has incurred a great loss. This is because this individual has spent his wealth on something which is of no worth whatsoever. Likewise, if a person were to spend valuable moments on something which albeit is not inherently harmful, but which at the same time does not bring any benefit, then every intelligent individual will say that this person has incurred a great loss. This is because he has spent the valuable asset of time upon something which will bring him no return, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Time Management

In the society in which we live, time is valued greatly; and it is through efficient use of time that great progress has been made. Time management courses, taught by experts, detail how an individual can make the most of his time. University graduates, company directors, lecturers and students spend money to enrol on such courses so that they can learn how to use their time wisely.

Our pious predecessors, through the company of their Mashāyikh, had learnt the value of time. This is why, despite not undertaking a dedicated course on time management, they utilised their time so wisely that it is difficult to find examples with which to compare them. Without enrolling on such courses, through the company of the pious, they learnt not to waste a single second of their lives and how to spend their time in the most fruitful pursuits. With this training, they were able to undertake such great works and their accomplishments are so vast that what they were able to achieve is indeed astonishing.

How our Pious Predecessors Valued Time

Dr. ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy ‘Ārifī ﷺ narrates regarding his mentor Ḥakīm-al-Ummah Shaykh Mawlānā Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﷺ, “In the eyes of our respected Shaykh ﷺ, time held great value. It would appear that Allāh ﷻ had made valuing time part of Shaykh’s ﷺ nature. He would ensure that each second was spent efficiently and his eyes would always be on the clock. Shaykh ﷺ would follow a strict timetable, fulfilling each allocated action at its appointed time. It is through this strict discipline that Shaykh ﷺ was able to produce a great

treasure of scholarly works and deliver priceless advices which continue to be a means of guidance.” This is the statement of that person who saw Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ with his own eyes!

We can further understand the great importance that Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ attached to observing a timetable from the following famous incident. Once, Shaykh-al-Hind (The Shaykh of India) Shaykh Mawlānā Maḥmūd-al-Ḥasan ﵀ visited Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀. Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ was a student of Shaykh-al-Hind ﵀ and held him in such high regard that he would refer to him as Shaykh-al-‘Ālam (The Shaykh of the World). It so happened that Shaykh-al-Hind ﵀’s visit overlapped with the time that Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ had scheduled for writing. With great politeness, Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ mentioned to his teacher that this was the time he had allocated for writing and requested permission to fulfil this routine task.

Shaykh-al-Hind ﵀ happily granted him permission. Even though the visit of his teacher entailed that Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﵀ did not feel like writing, he did not forgo his regular practice. Thus he wrote a few sentences and once again returned to benefit from the company of Shaykh-al-Hind ﵀.

Shaykh Mawlānā ‘Āshiq Ilāhī ﵀ has written regarding Shaykh Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī ﵀ that whatever the situation or condition, no change would be seen in the timetable or daily practices of the respected Shaykh.

The intense dedication towards religious work and the value attached to time by Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad

Zakariyyā ﵏ can be gauged from the fact that on occasions the respected Shaykh ﵏ would not even realise that he has not eaten. It was only when some 30 hours would pass since his last meal and when the effects of hunger would begin to manifest as weakness that Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﵏ would remember that he had not had food.

His commitment to his work was one of the reasons that he received the special attention of the pious. In his autobiography, Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﵏ narrates how he would pay regular visits to Thānā Bhawan for the printing of Badhl-al-Majhūd (An Arabic commentary on the Sunan of Imām Abū Dāwūd ﵏). He would receive the final draft by Ẓuhr time and he would need to submit the edited version before leaving in the evening. Thus, the respected Shaykh ﵏ would sit in a corner of the masjid reviewing the texts thoroughly until 'Aṣr time. The public lectures delivered by Shaykh Ashraf 'Alī At-Thānwī ﵏ would also take place in Thānā Bhawan at this time. Hence, Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﵏ would feel great deprivation at not being able to attend due to the demands of his research.

On one occasion Shaykh-al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﵏ mentioned this feeling to Shaykh Ashraf 'Alī At-Thānwī ﵏ and said, "People come from far and wide to benefit from you, yet this unworthy one, despite being in close proximity, is unable to benefit from your lectures." In reply Shaykh Ashraf 'Alī At-Thānwī ﵏ commented, "Do not worry. Even though you are not in my company I am in your company. I continue to watch you and greatly admire your dedication. Indeed, this is the manner through which work is accomplished."

Spiritual Harm

Time is something to be valued greatly for it is time that is our greatest wealth. Whosoever utilises time well will be able to acquire benefit both in this world and the Hereafter; and whosoever wastes time will definitely face harm both in this world and the Hereafter.

Dr ‘Abd-al-Ḥayy ‘Ārifī ﷺ has stated that it is through futile actions that the nūr (spiritual light) of worship is lost.

The student of Imām Abū Thawr ﷺ, and the nephew and disciple of Shaykh Sirrī ﷺ, Shaykh Ab-al-Qāsim ﷺ has commented that:

عَلاَمَةُ إِعْرَاضِ اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى عَنِ الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يُّشْغِلَهُ بِمَا لاَ يَعْنِيْهِ

> "If a servant of Allāh ﷻ indulges in lā ya‘nī, it should be taken as a sign that Allāh ﷻ has shunned this individual."

What a grave warning this is, may Allāh ﷻ safeguard us all.

Shaykh Ashraf ‘Alī At-Thānwī ﷺ has stated, "I say on oath that if a person were to ponder upon his futile actions, then he will definitely realise that these futile actions lead him to sin. For example sometimes people, without need, ask me when I am going to visit a certain place. Such unnecessary questioning troubles me; and to cause trouble to a Muslim is a sin. Indeed, there is no futile or unnecessary action whose border does not overlap with acts of sin."

Consequently, we can understand that even though a futile action may be permissible in the outset, its eventual result will be that of committing a sin.

Those Who Valued Time

Those fortunate individuals who have safeguarded themselves from useless pursuits and valued their time have not only benefited themselves but also the Ummah at large. It is not hard to judge from the sheer volume and calibre of their accomplishments the great value they accorded to time.

The great Muḥaddith Yaḥyā Ibn Ma'īn ﷺ transcribed one million aḥādīth by hand in his lifetime. 'Allāmah Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabarī ﷺ wrote and published 358,000 pages of works related to Dīn.

The Commentator on the Ṣaḥīḥ of Imām Muslim ﷺ and the author of the famed Riyāḍ-aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn, 'Allāmah An-Nawawī ﷺ lived for only 45 years; yet if an assessment is made of the works he compiled, one can deduce that he wrote four pages of knowledge for every day of his life.

The author of Tafsīr Rūḥ-al-Ma'ānī, 'Allāmah Al-Ālūsī Al-Baghdādī ﷺ, would normally teach 24 lessons a day. Whilst engaged in work of iftā and compiling his tafsīr, the 'Allāmah would teach 13 lessons a day, and at night, after finishing all his other duties, he would continue to work on writing and researching for his tafsīr. The next day he would pass on what he had written to the scribes. It is narrated that 'Allāmah Ālūsi ﷺ would write so profusely that it would take a number of scribes ten hours to write what the 'Allāmah alone would amass during the course of just one night.

After the death of 'Allāmah Ibn-al-Jawzī ﷺ, only those filings and sawdust was used to warm the water for his burial ghusl which had been gathered from the quills and writing

instruments used by the respected Shaykh to write aḥādīth. This was in accordance with the Shaykh's bequest. Such was the quantity of this material that even after using it adequately to warm the water, there was some left behind. This was only the filings from the writing instruments with which the Shaykh used to write aḥādīth. So we can only imagine what quantity of filing and sawdust would have been amassed from the rest of the voluminous works that the Shaykh compiled.

The renowned Muḥaddith, Ibn 'Asākir ﷺ compiled the 'History of Damascus', which consists of 80 volumes. Despite his demanding academic engagements, he was also extremely observant of other acts of worship. Out of Ramaḍān, the Shaykh would complete one recitation of the Qur'ān weekly, whereas in Ramaḍān he would increase this to one complete recitation daily.

These are some of the achievements of our pious predecessors. They valued the precious moments of their lives and left behind such beneficial resources through which the Ummah will derive benefit until the Day of Qiyāmah; and through the blessings of these resources, inshā'allāh, their good deeds will continue to increase.

The Common Factor

If we study the pages of history, we will find that it is through valuing and utilising time that success is achieved. This is the common factor found in the lives of all those who have acquired any form of success.

The value of time in the sight of such people can be appreciated

from the following statement of Imām Khalīl ibn Aḥmad ﷺ:

أَثْقَلُ السَّاعَاتِ عَلَيَّ سَاعَةٌ آكُلُ فِيْهَا

"I find the time when I eat to be the most burdensome."

The great Mufassir, Imām Fakhr-ad-Dīn Ar-Rāzī ﷺ, despite authoring two hundred books for the benefit of the Ummah, would comment:

وَاللّٰهِ إِنَّنِيْ أَتَأَسَّفُ فِيْ الْفَوَاتِ عَنِ الْإِشْتِغَالِ بِالْعِلْمِ فِيْ وَقْتِ الْأَكْلِ فَإِنَّ الْوَقْتَ وَالزَّمَانَ عَزِيْزٌ

"I swear by Allāh! I feel great remorse from being deprived of academic engagement during the time I need to eat. This is because time is indeed a great asset."

One group is of these pious predecessors, who despite valuing each second of their lives, would constantly feel remorseful upon the passage of time. The other group - the group to which we belong - is of those who exercise no restraint when it comes to wasting time. We do not let any opportunity pass wherein we can waste our time. Despite this, never mind experiencing remorse, we do not even have the slightest awareness of the loss that we are in.

The Only Regret

Remember, even after entering Jannah and being granted all the blessings of Jannah, the residents of Jannah will feel remorse upon the time they wasted in negligence whilst in this world. The Prophet ﷺ has said:

لَيْسَ يَتَحَسَّرُ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا عَلَى سَاعَةٍ مَرَّتْ بِهِمْ لَمْ يَذْكُرُوْا اللّٰهَ

"The people of Jannah (after entering Jannah) will not have

remorse over anything other than the time spent without remembering Allāh.” (Al-Bayhaqī, Aṭ-Ṭabrānī)

From amongst the wise sayings that Imām Ash-Shāfi‘ī collected from the company of the pious, one is:

اَلْوَقْتُ سَيْفٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَقْطَعْهُ قَطَعَكَ

“Time is a sword. If you do not cut it (by utilising it in good deeds), it will definitely cut you.”

When someone asked to speak to the renowned Tābi‘ī, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd-al-Qays, he said, “Stop the sun in its orbit for a while; only then (will I have free time) in which to converse.”

Continually Diminishing

Time is passing by and it is an asset which diminishes continuously. It cannot be stored nor is there any method to stop it decreasing.

ہو رہی ہے عمر مثل برف کم
چپکے چپکے رفتہ رفتہ دم بدم

“Life is passing by, like the melting of ice.
Very quietly, slowly slowly, breath by breath.”

Each second that passes by is cutting a portion away from our life.

غافل تجھے گھڑیال یہ دیتا ہے منادی
گردوں نے گھڑی عمر کی ایک اور گھٹادی

“O negligent one! The clock is giving you this call:
The seconds of the clock have reduced your life a little more!”

The great ṣaḥābī, Ābū Ad-Dardā’ and the great tābi‘ī, Al-

Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī ﵀ once said:

يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ أَيَّامٌ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ يَوْمٌ ذَهَبَ بَعْضُكَ

"O son of Ādam! You are but (a collection of) days: when a day goes, a part of you goes."

A day that has passed will never return. Every morning at sunrise the day says:

مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَّعْمَلَ فِيْ خَيْرٍ فَلْيَعْمَلْهُ فَإِنِّيْ غَيْرُ مُكَرَّرٍ عَلَيْكُمْ أَبَدًا

"Whoever is able to do some good should do it, for I will never return to you." (Al-Bayhaqī)

Just think! Our childhood days have passed; for many their youth has passed; others have reached old age and are waiting only for death to come. Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿إِنَّ أَجَلَ ٱللَّهِ إِذَا جَآءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ﴾

" ...Indeed, when the term appointed by Allāh comes, it cannot be delayed..." (71:4)

Before that time comes, we should make the most of our lives. We should resolve that from now on we will not waste a single moment, and we will spend every second only in profitable ways.

A Poet says:

عمر دراز مانگ کر لائے تھے چار دن
دو آرزو میں کٹ گیے دو انتظار میں

"After asking for a long life, you came with a short life,
Half was spent in aspirations, and the other half in waiting!"

Another Poet says:

تجھے پہلے بچپن نے برسوں کھلایا   جوانی نے پھر تجھ کو مجنوں بنایا
بڑھاپے نے پھر آ کے کیا کیا ستایا   اجل تیرا کر دے گی بالکل صفایا
جگہ جی لگانے کی دنیا نہیں ہے   یہ عبرت کی جا ہے تماشہ نہیں ہے

“Initially, childhood delighted you with play for several years.
Thereafter, youth made you insane.
Then, old age, how it harassed you!
Finally, death will completely annihilate you.
This world is not a place of attachment.
It is a place to take lessons, and is not a place of entertainment.”

Before death strikes, we need to value our life. We need to resolve, from today, that, inshā’allāh, we will no longer waste our time, not even a second in futile acts; and that we will invest every second in doing beneficial actions. May Allāh ﷻ accept our intentions and grant us great blessings in them.

In order to give a practical form to this resolution, hereunder are a number of beneficial points of guidance that are tried and tested and derived from the teachings of our pious predecessors. We should try to note them in our minds and implement them in our lives.

1. Organise Our Time

The first point is to organise our time. Our pious predecessors were very particular about scheduling their time effectively, for it prevents time being wasted. Therefore, we should make a programme for the whole day and night in the form of a timetable and adhere strictly to it. At any particular time, do only what you have assigned for that time, and do not delay

anything from its appointed time.

Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣri ﷺ says, 'Beware of taswīf (procrastination).' Do not put anything off until tomorrow, for 'tomorrow' is simply a deception and a diversion. Procrastination is the biggest cause of people's neglect and failure. So make a habit of completing every task at its appointed time. In fact, strive for the enthusiasm to do tomorrow's task today and today's task now!

In connection with organising one's time, I should also add that when you are confronted by two or more tasks, do the one that is most necessary and that promises the most beneficial outcome.

2. Abstain from Futile Activities

The second point is to abstain from futile activities and pointless talk. When we spend time in some mubāḥ (permissible), non-beneficial activity, we argue that it is mubāḥ and therefore harmless. Such thinking is flawed. A great loss actually occurs in that an extremely valuable asset is spent in an activity that has no benefit.

Before doing anything, we have a habit of asking ourselves whether it will bring any loss to our worldly life or our life in the hereafter. If the answer is no, we feel there is no harm in doing it, even though it may not be beneficial. This way of thinking is wrong. Before doing anything we should ask ourselves if it will be beneficial for our worldly life and our life in the hereafter. If the answer is no, we should stay away from it, for though the action itself is not harmful, but to spend

a portion of life in an activity that is of no use in this world or the hereafter is in fact a loss. No one would spend money on something that brings no benefit. When spending money on something, people do not think about its possible harms; rather, they think about whether it will be of benefit or not. If it does not offer any benefit, people will not spend money on it.

From this we also understand that if we have to save ourselves from things that do not benefit us, how can there be any justification for spending time on things that are harmful in the world or the hereafter? Today, our youth are destroying their prospects for the hereafter and their worldly lives, through indulging in TV, internet, cinema-going and in reading indecent literature.

Sin and disobedience to Allāh ﷻ bring harm in both worlds, so save yourselves from them. There is nothing worse than disobedience to Allāh ﷻ when it comes to wasting time. May Allāh ﷻ protect us. Āmīn.

3. Unnecessary Gatherings

You should save yourselves from spending time in unnecessary gatherings, as the more you mix with people, the more time will be wasted in futile talk. Nowadays, we not only engage in useless, futile talk in our gatherings, we also indulge in major sins such as backbiting and slander. During weddings or while visiting the bereaved or the sick, people assemble for hours on end and waste time in unprofitable talk. Therefore, abstain from spending time in unnecessary gatherings and

mixing with people.

4. Safeguarding the Tongue

Do not speak without necessity; when you have to speak control your tongue and think before you speak. Be brief in your speech and weigh your words before speaking. The tongue indulges the most in futility. Abstaining from mixing with people and engaging in dhikr will help in safeguarding the tongue.

5. Muḥāsabah (Self-Reckoning)

Fix a time daily and do muḥāsabah of the past twenty-four hours, so you know how your time is being spent; through this you will realise how much is being lost, and how much is being gained. If time has been spent in good activities, thank Allāh ﷻ and ask for the ability to do more. If it has been spent in wrong avenues, repent and make a firm resolution to keep away from such things in the future.

Inshā'allāh, implementing these strategies will prevent time being wasted.

Final Advice

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that it is vital that we refrain from wasting our time in fruitless pursuits. Rather than engaging in useless talk and excessive socialising, we should invest the moments of our precious life in acquiring the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

Our time should be spent in worship, in developing our knowledge and in providing benefit to the society and

community in which we live; no second of our life should be squandered in acts of sin or futility.

ہر دم اللہ اللہ کر نور سے اپنا سینہ بھر

جیے تو اس کا ہو کر جی مرے تو اس کا ہو کر مر

"Upon each breath, remember Allāh, and fill your heart with nūr. Be His, as long as you live; and be His, when you depart (from this world)."

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq and may He make us amongst those who truly value and benefit from the priceless gift of time.

Invaluable 90 minutes...

Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafiẓahullāh* on one occasion spoke on the theme of valuing time. As part of the talk, Shaykh very beautifully explained how much loss is incurred through futile activities. He took the example of watching or listening to 90 minutes of football and questioned what benefit 90 minutes bring to a person. The fact is that we don't gain anything!

If we take into account alternative actions of virtue, we will very quickly realise the great loss.

Let us look at a few alternatives Shaykh mentioned:

• If you engage in reciting the Qur'ān for this length of time, you would on average recite 4 juz. Allāh ﷻ grants 10 rewards for every letter recited. Imagine how many letters you would recite in 4 juz and multiply that by 10!

By reading 4 juz you could have earned yourself at least 400,520 rewards!!!

• Recite *'Subḥānallāh walḥamdulillāh'*. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Subḥānallāh walḥamdulillāh fills the space between the skies and the earth." Think for a moment how much reward you would gain from 90 minutes of reciting this.

It is possible to gain the reward which will fill the space between the skies and the earth 4,410 times!!!

• Recite *'Subḥānallāhi walḥamdulillāhi wa lāilāha illallāhu wallāhu akbar'*. From a ḥādīth we learn that Jannah is a barren land and these glorifying words plant a tree for its reader in Jannah. During 90 minutes, you could prepare yourself a lovely forest of fruit trees.

In fact you could have planted 1,260 trees in Jannah!!!

• Recite Surah-Al-Ikhlās. In the ḥadīth it is mentioned that Surah Al-Ikhlās is equal to 1/3 of the Qur'ān. Hence, by reciting it 3 times you will earn the reward of reciting the full Qur'ān! Along with this, another ḥadīth explains that when a person recites Surah Al-Ikhlās 10 times, Allāh ﷻ builds a palace for him in Jannah.

In 90 minutes you could have earned the reward of 270 Qur'āns and built yourself 81 palaces in Jannah!!!

• Recite durūd, the shortest version is *'Ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam'*. In the ḥadīth it is stated that for every durūd a person sends upon the Prophet ﷺ, Allāh ﷻ forgives 10 sins, grants 10 rewards and elevates the person 10 stages.

In 90 minutes you could have had 40,500 sins forgiven, 40,500 rewards granted and 40,500 stages elevated in Paradise!!!

So you thought it was just 90 minutes of harmless fun? Might be worth looking at the figures again and calculating how much loss you have incurred during every match.